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Diversity in virtual teams: challenges and solutions

Virtual teams management, Case study

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<p>This thesis research was based on the study of virtual team management, done by observation and implementation work with case team.</p> <p>The team had such issues as miscommunication, lack of trust and motivation.</p> <p>Theoretical part includes a description of such terms as a team, virtual team, diversity and team management. Based on previous research papers and case studies in virtual team management, biggest challenges and issues discussed and highlighted in this chapter.</p> <p>Methodology chapter describes research method that was chosen for this thesis research. Including explanation and reflection on questionnaires that were used to collect the data.</p> <p>Case study chapter presents thesis research findings, strategy, implementation and further analysis of results.</p>	
Keywords	A team, virtual team, diversity, team management, leadership

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Today's world has expanded boundaries. With new technologies and modifications, business is taking it to the next level. People across borders can work on the same goal and complete challenges which were never reachable before. A world with no boundaries is the reality of the economy, business, and technologies in nowadays world. In the picture of a perfect world, technologies help to over-cross seas and forget about boundaries when it comes to cooperation. Future is in technologies and diverse virtual teams, which will have no limit on time zones, geographic location, face to face operations, culture or any other factors. The idea of this research is to get a better understanding which challenges such teams are facing and how to overcome them.

1.2 Business Challenge

The main goal of this research is to indicate and evaluate possible threats and to create a frame for the future team management, which can generally be implemented by any team. The research outcome will be in identifying existing boundaries within the team, individual and group boundaries and what affects team from outside. The outcome should be a list of suggestions and options on better management of the virtual and diverse reach teams.

1.3 Case Company

Thesis research team is a part of big international IT Company, which headquarters are in Helsinki. This company has offices in 20 different countries and has presented more than in 100 countries. Most employees of the company are cooperating with colleagues from other countries and use virtual networking on their daily bases. The team of this research located in 2 different offices: in Helsinki (HEL) and Kuala Lumpur (KL).

1.4 Objective and Scope

According to the Statistical Indicators Benchmarking, the Information Society (SIBIS) studies 13 percent of the total population of the EU can be classified as virtual workers. This means that more than 60 million people (based on EU population 2016), only in Europe working in virtual teams and possibly facing same challenges as presented

case study team. Research of a small team can evaluate and highlight possible challenges and problems, on a smaller scale.

The main issues in a team establishment are trust, motivation, common goal and team spirit. These elements make separated individuals to become a group, which working towards a common goal and moving the same direction. Any team, in general, has difficulties and problems to overcome. When it is coming to the virtual team, same problems can be even harder to conquer. Connection and trust issues are more dramatic within the distance and virtual team communities than in physical, traditional, face-to-face teams.

From the beginning of observing of the research team, there were several issues on the surface, such as trust, lack of motivation and team spirit. It was obvious that team members had secrets from each other, were gossiping and were not ready to rely on each other. Each team member was sure that he/she is the only person who does work in the team and the only person who does it right, which shows lack of right workload distribution. All processes were different, and they varied from person to person. Processes were not established on common knowledge shared information. The overall atmosphere in the team was gloomy and unhappy. Team members were not happy to come to work and did not feel motivated to work at all. They did not see any outcome of their work and did not feel appreciated or noticed by the company. Each team member trusted only to their work and was not ready to share problems or tasks with rest of the team. The work looked more as each was doing separated pieces of work than as a team working on the same goal. On top of that, team members that located in different time zones had even fewer points of contact, cross working projects or possibilities to work together.

Technological assets of the team were not established well enough to have frequent communication. Available tools didn't include common virtual space either shared folders or documents with common practices and information. Work distribution did not allow team members in different locations support each other. Furthermore, leadership and management of the team were not established. Team members didn't trust to discuss their problems and issues with manager. Mistrust led to miscommunication on leadership level and general misguidance of team issues. The manager was not aware of any problems of the team. He wasn't familiar with work that team was doing and wasn't able to give any advice or deal with work-related issues, which led to mistrust in his competence.

The team included in total 13 female and three male. Distribution of the team was as follows:

KL – 6 (females, 20-40 age) and HEL – 10 (3 male 24-50 age, 7 female 23- 50 age)

1.5 Thesis Outline

The thesis research work is an observation field study based on daily work of a specific team. The main method of the study is to observe and evaluate challenges, advantages, and possible modernization and understand how each team member presented and acts. To understand the subject better and for better analysis, several existing studies were researched. The thesis will include citations from books, articles, studies and personal observation. The study will describe the type of the team, changes the team has been going through within 6 to 9 months, challenges and visible problems within the team, as well as hidden concerns and challenges. In the beginning, the team had five people located in HEL office and 5 in KL office. Some team members changed within the year into 10 in HEL and 6 in KL. The team is based in 2 different time zones and works with customers, live, in several other time zones.

To be able to cover team changes, there will be used and presented results of research done inside the team. During that period, the team answered twice the same questions, to measure the satisfaction with work and team performance. The research evaluates Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of the team and on the team member satisfaction. The research will allow investigating the situation and spirit within the team and if there were any effects of the studies. The research was performed in the form of constant implementation of different suggestions and changes. Above mentioned includes the change in the team distribution, some team members and diversity of members (based on gender, age, and cultural background).

Existing knowledge part of thesis includes theory, discussion, and research based on previous findings in the topics of virtual teams and important elements on teamwork. There will also be presented terminology: team, virtual team, diversity, challenges in the teams and challenges in virtual teams. For the better understanding of the topic, research will include theoretical frame. In the beginning, the work will identify what topic about, key elements and keywords are. Following that, more dimensions of theory and different level of team structures will be presented for better understanding of the concept of the topic. This part will be followed by the presentation of observation subject. There will be described the team, team dynamics, analysis of day to day work. The

final chapter will present team operation model, what challenges team is, what steps were taken to solve them and what was a result.

The outcome of this thesis research is to understand better challenges of virtual team management and pieces of advice how to deal with them. The idea of this study is to discover and to analyze all the issues and find possible solutions how to overcome them. As a result, there will be presented not only problems but as well steps that were taken to evaluate the problem, strategy towards eliminating problems and implementation. As well there will be a second survey and analysis which will help to see what did work for the team, what did not, what has improved with the time, what didn't change at all within the limited time frame. Based on this analysis there should be a discovery of solutions and ideas, which can be implemented in the future in any team. The outcome should be descriptive and generalized for a big audience of possible team structures. The subject of research has various members with a different background, age, gender, and living location, which makes the study and its outcome more generic and suitable for various teams. The outcome of this thesis is a list of suggestions what should be taken into consideration in establishing a virtual team, what issues are most common and how they can be illuminated. What does work and what doesn't, as well recommendations on how it can be implemented?

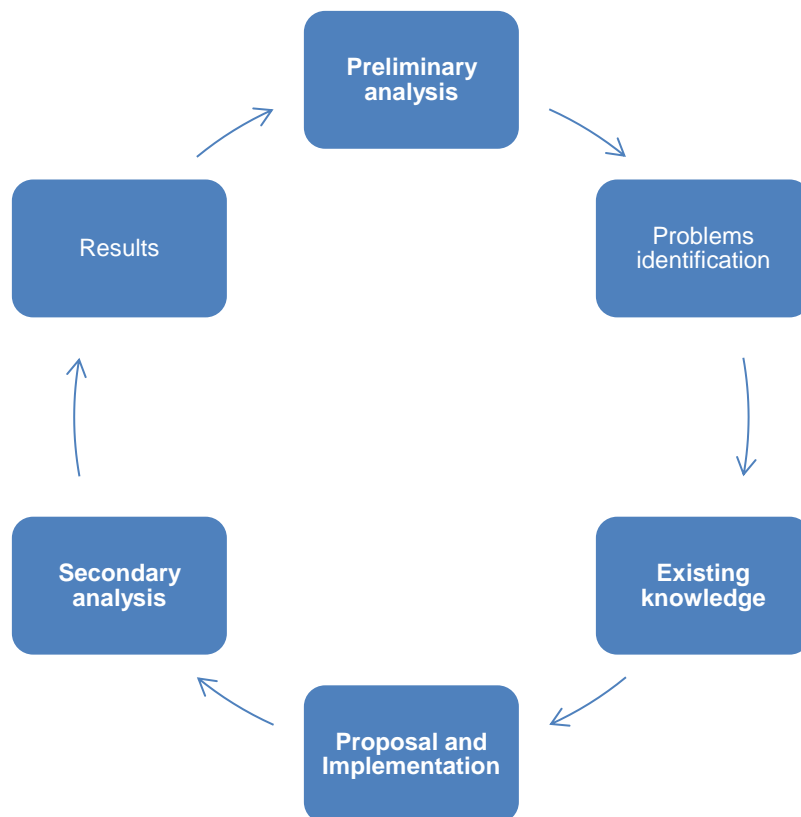
2 Methodology

This section introduces and discusses theoretical part of the thesis and includes discussion and research based on previous findings in the topics of virtual teams and important elements on teamwork. There will be described such terminology as a team, virtual team, diversity, challenges in the teams and challenges in virtual teams.

2.1 Research approach

In this Thesis as the main methodology was chosen to be observation and qualitative research. As qualitative research is primarily exploratory, it usually used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. Qualitative research helps to explore the problem and dive deeper into the understanding of challenges. Usually, qualitative research method is used to analyze a focus group or small group of a participant. (dictionary.cambridge.org). The description matches the thesis study subject, a small team of 16, located in HEL and KL.

2.2 Research Design



Research design following cycle presented in the graph. Preliminary analysis is based on existing fellow engagement survey, which was done by the company in 2015. Problem identification is a logical conclusion of the analysis and recognition of challenges that exist in the thesis research team.

Existing knowledge stage will be presented through case analysis and research of literature that explain the subject and describes challenges. This chapter is important in the evaluation of challenges and a good base to create a proposal that would be based on discovered solutions.

Next step in research design is to implement the proposal and analyze a result, to see what has worked and what should continue to be studied.

As a final stage block in this research design, there will be presented results. Based on this analysis there should be a discovery of solutions and ideas which can be implemented in the future in any team.

2.3 Data collection and Analysis

Data was collected through company employee branding qualitative survey and interviews and discussions. Data for this research was collected through the year period in two stages.

Data Round	Data Type	Data Source	Date & Approach	Recording	Purpose/ Focus
First State Analysis	Questionnaire (Appendix 1)	Project Manager 1 Team Members 11	28/10/2015 – 11/11/2015	online database	Employee branding purposes and employee satisfaction
	Discussions	Project Manager 1 Team Members 11	11 – 12 /2015 Face to face	Notes	
	Internal Documents	Fellows engagement	12/2015		

		survey			
Building the Proposal	Discussions	Manager, team leader	12/2015	Notes	Create a strategy, plan proposal, plan implementation
	Workshop	Team members	12/2015	Notes	
Validation	Questionnaire (Appendix 2)	Project Manager 1 Team Lead Team Members 9	07/2016	An online survey, email	Conclusion, outcome, suggestions
	Discussions	Project Manager 1 Team Lead Team Members 9	07/2016 Face to face	Notes, email, phone (notes)	

For the base of the thesis research, initial fellow engagement questionnaire which was presented in the company in 2015 was used. Data was minimized to thesis research team and short outcome of this questionnaire presented in Appendix 1. This preliminary research evaluated problems and challenges in study team and provided a base for current research. The questionnaire included information regarding work motivation, work/life balance, team spirit, and satisfaction with position, work distribution and personal happiness of team members.

The second qualitative research questionnaire was partly based on the previous questionnaire, to analyze if responses changed within the time. This questionnaire present-

ed in Appendix 2. This survey included not only similar questions on work/ life balance as previous one but as well included questions regarding underlined challenges that were found during the first survey, such as motivation, tools, team spirit, leadership and team management.

Both questionnaires included questions which were able to answer with scale 1 to 5. Where one was strongly disagreeing, and five strongly agree with the statement. This structure enabled to scale and analyze team members' opinions on most important subjects such as motivation, common goal, self and team recognition. Moreover, questions included an option to answer with open text, leave a comment or write own suggestion. That was done to evaluate team members' engagement, wiliness to cooperate and motivation on team improvement.

The first survey was chosen as a base for this thesis research as an existing knowledge base. The survey was created by a team of people who were taking care of employees' engagement. Results of this survey were publicly announced and were visible to each employee of the company. Results of the first survey initiated an idea to use gained information on team's challenges, work out a strategy and with the help of management to work through this challenges and at the end evaluate a result. To compare the data and make research sufficient, the second survey included most relevant questions that were used during the first survey. Open text questions were created to give an opportunity to the team members to give their honest opinions on the team spirit, work, and performance. Open text questions were also created based on previous findings that trust and open discussions were previously missing in the team. Opportunity to express opinion freely and suggest ideas is creating trust and bonding team members.

Theory of virtual teams helped to analyze the current team, to understand its structure, to implement suggestions and to see results of the changes. The observation was the biggest part of a current study. As an author of the thesis was a part of the team, it was mostly based on personal experiences, observation, and involvements in the processes. The author also took part as a mediator in the study team.

The observation was done within the year period. The first survey was accomplished after three months being a part of the team. That was the time when most challenges and problems were evaluated. (Analysis of survey presented in chapter 6). Then changes and suggestions based on the first survey were implemented in the team. The second survey was done after six months since changes took place. This survey included an overall analysis of a team, discussion on what changed within the time, what worked, what didn't, what can be used in the future. How this study outcome can be beneficial for others.

Research of a small team is a convenient way to evaluate and highlighted possible challenges and problems. The small size of a team makes it possible to evaluate problem faster, to analyze outcome, come up with the solution and implement it. Fewer amounts of people are easier to manage, to have personal discussions and follow. Through continues research and observation it was possible to react fast to changes in team members' behavior and make corrections in strategies and team management. Both surveys helped to evaluate the biggest challenges in the team and start to make changes for the improvement, to see how it changed with time and how flexible and adoptive members for the inventions.

The outcome of this study is to discover and to analyze all the issues and find possible solutions how to overcome them. As a result, there will be presented not only problems but as well steps that were taken to evaluate the problem, strategy towards eliminating problems and implementation. This analysis will help to see what did work for the team, what did not, what has improved with the time, what didn't change at all within the limited time frame. Based on this analysis there should be a discovery of solutions and ideas which can be implemented in the future in any team.

2.4 Validity and Reliability

This research designed to measure team performance and satisfaction one should take in consideration team size, management operations, and company structure. It is important to remember that team usually consists of diverse people, and they can have a different background, education, and life goals. This research didn't go further into the team member's background details, which can be done for further analysis.

Research questionnaire is based on general employee satisfaction factors and can be performed in any other team or company. A preliminary questionnaire was developed for this particular company and its needs. The secondary questionnaire was developed on top of the first one and applied for the particular team. The secondary research was based on findings from the preliminary questionnaire and presenting challenges and weak points of the particular team. This means that weak point can vary from team to team.

Presented research is done in small team physically distributed in 2 different countries. Cultural diversity should be taking in measurement and applied in further or similar research in future research can have a continuous base for work and satisfaction im-

provement of the same team. It can be as well used for any teams in the future. Presented research can be done without any limitations on team sizes or locations.

Author of thesis performed the study on the personal initiative. The main motivation was to apply personal studies and findings and to improve team environment. That makes researcher have a personal attachment to the subject and motivation to move it forward.

As team distributed in two different locations and author presented only in one, there is a risk that not all team members will participate in the questionnaire and the research. In that case, there will be a bigger percentage of team members participating from one location. This, on the one hand, will highlight and evaluate problems and challenges in virtual environment and support thesis research case.

3 Current State Analysis

The thesis is observation field study based on daily work of a specific team. The study will describe the type of the team, changes the team has been through within 6 to 9 months, the year 2015- 2016, challenges and visible problems within the team, as well as hidden concerns and challenges. In the beginning, the team had five people located in HEL and 5 in KL (number of team members changed within the year 10 in HEL and 6 in KL. (Due to the data privacy team will be mentioned as the team, without mentioning the actual company, team name, or team members). The team is specializing in customer support and sales support. The purpose of the team to enable companies partners to buy and sell the product, make the selling process for all parties as easy as possible.

First getting to know and observation of the team was in 2015. The team observation was based on personal experiences and contribution, from team member perspective. At the beginning team in Helsinki had four members and a manager.

From the first day, there was obvious miscommunication in the team. When new member started the rest of the team did not know which day or was not informed why a new team member was hired and what was the purpose. There was no common knowledge library or any written guidance for the new employee. The entire knowledge passing was done manually from person to person. The introduction of the new member to the company and other members had highlighted information that this role is temporary. Furthermore, there was mentioned that new person shouldn't get too involved or attached to the company as there is no chance to stay in the team. That gave an impression that team spirit doesn't exist, team members are not sure in their future and the future of their positions. There was clear misguiding, lack of information on the company, lack of the information on the role, lack of introduction and no emotional attachment or willingness to welcome a new member. From observation point of view on the team, the environment wasn't healthy. Team members didn't share information on the roles, wasn't expecting or offering help to each other, were not acting as a team neither had close relationships or friendly relationships with each other. Introduction to KL team happened only after one week of work. There was no cross-communication, neither information sharing with the rest of the team that worked from KL.

First survey on the fellow engagement and satisfaction performed in 2015. At that time team consisted of 11 people in total. Responses were made in different scales. (Appendix 1) Results show that team members' satisfaction and motivation were very low. As an example, the rate for recommending the current company as an employer was only 18,2 out of 100. Based on survey results we can see that people felt underappreciated, they would lack motivation, feeling overstressed and do not have friends at work. Especially work distribution seems to be the most questionable. Furthermore, team members were not very optimistic about their future in current team or even with current employer. 36% of the team was looking for other job opportunities. On top of that teamwork wasn't recognized by the company, which led to the problems with sales team and customer support.

The strength of the team is that it is a part of big international IT Corporation, with more than ten years of experiences working between locations and divers' cultural background, diverse team members. Managers and Corporation are experienced with working in virtual teams across the different country locations. As this is an IT corporation, it has the better understanding and better tools for virtual communication. The team is working on administrative tasks and does not have experiences in programming neither have engineering skills, what shouldn't be a problem in virtual co-working space.

For the better understanding of issues, this thesis includes existing knowledge studies of concepts of team, virtual team, diversity and team management. With knowledge based on this studies, there will be building a proposal how to tangle and solve this issues.

4 Existing Knowledge

4.1 Team

According to BusinessDictionary.com team is a group of people with a full set of complementary skills required to complete a task, job, or project. Team members (1) operate with a high degree of interdependence, (2) share authority and responsibility for self-management, (3) are accountable for the collective performance, and (4) work toward a common goal and shared reward(s). A team becomes more than just a collection of people when a strong sense of mutual commitment creates synergy, thus generating performance greater than the sum of the performance of its members.

4.2 Virtual team

A team is a group of people that have common goals and tasks that they need to do collectively. The study subject is a team of people from different locations, working on same problems virtually distributed, which leads to the next **subject**: Virtual team. The difference between team and *the virtual team* is not that dramatic. One of the common definitions for virtual teams is groups of people who may be geographically apart but interact electronically with projects and work-related activities. In a Virtual team, team members do not necessary located in the same room. Nowadays understanding of virtual team is very wide. Team members can locate in different countries, or they can even be in the same building, but not necessarily physically be in the same room. Distance leads to the challenges not only in communication but also in management.

A virtual team is not a new subject or something that just became popular with globalization. The prediction of virtual teams and workplaces as a place for activities was already made in the 80s and 90s. Nowadays many companies have one or other virtual communication, teamwork, or collaboration which can be classified as virtual teamwork. Virtual teams differentiate from communities by many aspects. Teams and especially virtual teams established for specific reasons, for instance, task or project. In that case, the project should be finished in a possible shortest time frame. That leads to building the team with the best performance. A team in this context is a group of people mutually accountable for creating a product, delivering a service, or carrying out a mission. A virtual team is made up of geographically, functionally, or organizationally dis-

persed people who rely almost completely on technology as their primary means to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate with each other.

Virtual continues to refer to many different things (Shultze and Orlikowski 2001), including teams or organizations that are temporary or that cross one or more boundaries (Espinosa et al. 2003). ((O'Leary and Cummings, 2007))

As globalization and technologies are developing, nowadays, some organizations have created “hoteling” options for employees, in which they no longer have assigned offices, and it is increasingly common to leverage telecommuting and virtual teamwork. Virtual teamwork gives to team members (colleagues), to work from any location, in any time zone, or in a most comfortable environment. The virtual teams and collaboration became so popular that some companies have less office space. Especially, when the main field of the company is information technology (IT). For instance, according to a study from Communications of the ACM 3 (conducted by Intel Corporation in April 2009) approximately two-thirds of the company's employees were in virtual teams. Since then, the world became even more technology supported.

To be more descriptive, these changes touched not only IT industry but also virtual collaboration has transformed in many other business sectors. For example, it's becoming increasingly used in the healthcare industry because it helps to improve availability and treatment. In this case, there was virtual team collaboration already in 2007. An international virtual team was built from all over the globe with medical specialists to support marathon swimmers. Financial Times published an article in January 2007 describing all benefits and possibilities of such collaboration, when there was no limitation in health support.

There are positive and negative sides of virtual teams when it comes to collaboration. On the one hand, the use of virtual teams better enables organizations to leverage talented employees without having to bring them together face-to-face, is decreasing costs, but at the same time might lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. The emergence of a global economy has made it particularly challenging for organizations to quickly capitalize on shifts in the marketplace and bring new products to market, effectively innovate, and respond to customers' needs. Having team members in

various locations around the world enable organizations to meet these challenges better. (Darleen M. DeRosa Richard Lepsinger., 22 -24p).

The benefit of a virtual team is that organizations are looking for the best available talent, regardless of their geographic location, already on hiring stage. Also changed dynamics of teams establishment within the company and available human resources inside the company. Nowadays, when forming teams, rather than rely on a group of people who are geographically close but may not have the right expertise, many companies strategically select talented individuals who have the appropriate skill set, even though they may live in different countries and time zones. (Darleen M. DeRosa Richard Lepsinger.,p 21)

4.3 Diversity and diversity management

Diversity describes by the dictionary as "the inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.", which describes the concept of our topic nicely. (dictionary.com) In general, diversity can mean almost anything: different origin, culture, gender, language, etc. For us, thus who are interested in diversity managing, each aspect of any diversity is important. Most of the articles that describe or research diversity are about gender and race, furthermore next in line of popularity in divers' subject are women and minorities. The most popular topics of diversity and diversity management are minority groups. It seems that 90% of theory and articles written on the subject are the studies regarding how to avoid discrimination, how make people work together and live in peace, understand each other, but at the same time keep the identity and be different. Referring to Ahu Tatli findings: diversity management originated in the late 1980s in the USA as a supposedly new management paradigm to deal with the issues of workplace inequality and diversity. (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998; Thomas, R. R., 1990). In the following decades, the literature on the subject increased and diversity management became an established field of inquiry in management research (Bell and Berry, 2007). However, as Zanoni et al. (2010) observe, there is a scope and a need for improving the conceptual tools and empirical explorations in this area to contextualize diversity management processes in their socioeconomic and organizational settings.

As we can see, the subject of diversity is not new and has been up in the air for the decades. There have been studies done to explain what diversity is and what it is needed for. As we have discovered before, diversity is a very wide subject, which leads us to the problem of finding the right research or to scoop any research well enough, as there some data will always be left out of the scoop. Most of the researchers and articles emphasize and highlights that diversity is good. Diversity leads to innovation and knowledge exchange. For example, Anne Nederveen and her colleagues from Erasmus University write next:

Organizations that want to compete for the best talent must seek to attract and hire from this pool of workers, which is increasingly diverse regarding gender, race, and nationality. (Nederveen Pieterse, A., van Knippenberg, D. and van Dierendonck, D. (2013).)

First diversity management can help organizations capitalize on the benefits of a diverse workforce. Cox and Blake (1991) proposed that diversity management reduces turnover and absenteeism, attracts the best workers, increases sales and marketing efforts, enhances creativity and innovation, and improves decision-making. Thus, executives are more likely to devote resources and commitment to diversity efforts (Robinson and Dechant, 1997). Second, diversity management is a voluntary corporate approach to dealing with increasing demographic diversity in the workplace. Agocs and Burr (1996) pointed out that diversity management helps promote awareness of individual difference and empathy for those who are different and encourages attitude change. From the research paper we can see that

organizations with advertised diversity management practices were perceived to be more attractive employers (Williams and Bauer, 1994), attracted more black applicants (Highhouse et al., 1999a; Avery, 2003), and were more successful at recruiting women and minorities (Cox and Blake, 1991). Rynes and Cable (2003) argued that applicants are at least as concerned about picking the right organization as about choosing the right job. ((Ng and Burke, 2005))

Yves R. F. Guillaume, Jeremy F. Dawson, Steve A. Woods, Claudia A. Sacramento and Michael A. West as well notice in their research that companies that care about diversity attract higher levels of the workforce.

Diversity can, for example, improve talent attraction, boost creativity and innovation, and increase organizational flexibility (Cox and Blake 1991; Watson, Kumar and Michaelsen 1993). ((Ng and Sears, 2010))

Another article states that throughout the world, the workforce is becoming more diverse in cultural background. This article takes diversity in the direction of a team performing. Because many organizations make use of teams as their basic structure, great attention has been paid to the effects of cultural diversity on team performance (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). When it comes to the team management and diversity in the team, articles state that each team diverse in some sense, so each team should be treated not only for its diversity but also mostly for the team performance. A team, to have success, need to have a common goal. The common goal, how the article states, is a mechanism for doing diversity work positively. (Shore et al., 2009)

Researchers have recognized that the performance benefits of diversity are more likely to emerge on more complex tasks with stronger creative, problem-solving, and decision-making requirements (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; van Knippenberg et al., 2004; cf. Joshi & Roh, 2009). Missing from this perspective, however, is a recognition that not only relatively objective task characteristics may play a role here, but also the motivational orientations that are invited by a given achievement situation. ((Nederveen Pieterse, van Knippenberg and van Dierendonck, 2013))

Why do people for teams and work together? When people work together, they have greater chance to achieve more. Yves R. F. Guillaume*, Jeremy F. Dawson, Steve A. Woods, Claudia A. Sacramento And Michael A. West. Reflect on team-work as to positive development.

Social scientists have shown that teams and organizations whose members are heterogeneous in meaningful ways, for example, in skill set, education, work experiences, perspectives on a problem, cultural orientation, and so forth, have a higher potential for innovation than teams whose members are homogeneous. Furthermore, the article of Beryl Nelson gives us the evidence and numbers on the success of divers' teams:

Benefits of Diversity Diverse teams are more effective: they produce better financial results and better results in innovation. These results show that having a diverse organization is a business imperative.

In the same article, it states that companies in the top quartile for women in the executive committee from 2007–2009 had 41% greater return on equity, and 56% greater earnings before interest and taxes than companies with no women in the executive committee, for companies within the same industrial sector. Since then, time passed, and figures have changed, but as we can see the number of women in high-level management increased just slightly. Similar results have been found for race: organizations with greater racial diversity were associated with greater sales revenue, a larger number of customers, greater market share, and greater profits. In the same study, greater gender diversity was also found to be associated with better results in sales revenue, some customers, and profitability. That can be a result of cultural understanding and knowledge exchange. Race diversity brings teamwork to next level. People from different races or backgrounds usually try to get together. Members of cultural identity groups share certain world-views, socio-cultural heritages, norms, and values (Cox, 1993; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Worchel, 2005). A well-balanced team will prevent it but instead will maximize the team outcome. ((Nederveen Pieterse, van Knippenberg and van Dierendonck, 2013))

The diversity of network matters because if network is made up of people who are similar in identity (e.g., race, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or class) or organizational (e.g., hierarchical level and departmental affiliation) group membership, they are more likely to have similar experiences, perceptions, and networks. If you have a diverse network, you are likely to have access to a greater range of resources that can provide task, career, and social support. Diversity can be seen as competitive advantage based on several statements. Positive publicity. It is nice for companies to be well known as company open doors for diversities. Sending a message that “human resources effectively and likely to be progressive with other important and complex organizational initiatives as well.” It can be viewed from recruitment development, and retention of the best talent companies and organization with wide diversity has a wider pool of talents. Another proven benefit of diverse teams is more effective problem solving, decision making, and work process. Researchers David Thomas and Robin Ely discussed that groups that traditionally “outside the mainstream...bring different, im-

portant, and competitively relevant knowledge and perspectives about how to do work/ how to design processes, reach goals, frame tasks, create effective teams, communicate ideas, and lead. When allowed to, members of these groups can help companies grow and improve by challenging basic assumptions about an organization's functions, strategies, operations, practices, and procedures.” Diverse teams, when well managed, tend to make better decisions than relatively homogeneous groups, particularly when dealing with non-routine, complex problems in which the diversity of team members provides resources that are relevant to the teams\ tasks. One more benefit of such team is lower operating costs. Organizations that effectively manage diversity may have lower operating costs because people in minority groups are more likely to be more satisfied with the organization are better able to use their abilities at work and are less likely to leave the organization to look for better opportunities elsewhere.

The idea of management is to make different people not only to work together but as well to get benefits from this cooperation. The biggest challenge is to find the right people and fit them in the right proportion with each other to have the best outcome. Therefore, what does it mean the right proportion and right people? Nowadays world and economy are flat; they are global; languages, culture, behavioral understanding: are all benefits on the market. Each company, who is interested in customer engagement and benefits from sales, understand how it is important to have people within the company, which will be able to speak the same language with customers. Nowadays we are leaving in the global, multicultural world, where the fight for rights and equality has been taking far further then it could be imagined, all of us face diversity in one or other way. As we are talking about diverse management as an example will be taken divers team situation at work. For example, the company N is located in Finland working in IT and hiring the top talents. What can be attractive in that situation? A company will try to attract the best talents in its industry-first from a local market, then globally. For better success, a company will need to hire a diverse team. The point of divers will be gender, age, languages, education, and nationality. By hiring and constructing very diverse team company will get a team which will be able to work on the product or the project with 360 degrees perspective. A team will benefit from outbox thinking, languages and outcome that will be able to attract not only customers but as well new talents for the future.

What can be difficult in that situation is make different people work and even more, to achieve results. In personal opinion, each team is diverse; even members are coming

from the same country and same background. There are always will be points of diversity, gender or age or something else. The most challenging and most important is managerial work. The manager should be able to see what each member is capable of, how to make the team one, how to set a common goal and how to make the team working together towards this common goal. Another example of diversity management is student groups in international programs. There is a trend on diversity and multi-cultures'. Universities try to teach future leaders and managers how to deal with a group formed from people who radically differentiate from each other. It helps to see in practice what can be challenging and what can be beneficial. It does not always help to see the best way to manage problems, but it teaches to be open to most unexpected outcomes.

The preliminary studies showed that Diversity and Diverse Management specifically are very hot topics. There are many different articles and researchers. There are researches based on Diversity from the view of HR (how to hire right people, how to attract talents, how to train), from the view of employers (how to make it work and get the result from diverse employees) and employees (the place with most opportunities). Companies look for people who can work in diverse environment and furthermore search for people who can manage diversity and lead it to benefit.

To finalize what was written above; the diversity is a formula, which companies and organizations are trying to use for their benefit. However, this statement leads to the next question: what are the challenges? Is diversity simple? No, it cannot be something simple because it includes many elements. Is diversity good, it is good if a company (or team) can make it work the way they need if the diverse team has a common goal and several different ways to achieve that goal. Diversity can be beneficial or can destroy company; the right managing is the key to success in the world of diversity. Diversity management is a combination of knowledge, intelligent and psychological work. One of the articles highlighted the idea that more diverse team, more diverse managerial group of the company, more diverse managers and CEO's, more motivation for employees to work hard. Each person needs to have motivation and goal toward which they will be moving forward, individually or in the group.

To understand a current study team and situation, there were several articles and studies analyzed for getting a better picture and better understanding what the challenges

of virtual collaboration and different diversity dimensions are. One of the studies administered an online survey to 427 team members and leaders of intact virtual teams. Also, there was collected third-party data from ninety-nine stakeholders—individuals who are very familiar with the teams, such as internal customers or the team leaders' managers—to objectively assess team performance. And to better understand the common experiences and challenges for virtual team leaders and team members, the study conducted more than fifty telephone interviews with virtual team members, team leaders, human resource (HR) professionals, and stakeholders. Plus, in a separate study, we administered an online survey to 304 individuals who worked on virtual teams but were not on the same team. In this study of the 304 individuals who worked on virtual teams, 25 percent believed that their teams were not fully effective. Third-party stakeholders who were familiar with a given team's performance were asked to rate its effectiveness. Of forty-eight teams, 27 percent were perceived to be adequate or below adequate regarding their overall performance. When team members and team leaders were asked to assess their effectiveness, 17 percent of the teams rated their performance as being adequate or below adequate.

To summarize findings in the previous paragraph, the research found that, while many virtual teams are successful, a significant number are not reaching their full potential. And based on gaps in the perception of team effectiveness, it also appears that many organizations are not even aware that their virtual teams are performing poorly. Same research results indicate that virtual teams that had more than four team-development sessions performed significantly better than those that had one or fewer sessions. Forty-five percent of those in the study said that the top skill-development needs for those working in virtual teams are communication and interpersonal skills. After that, teams selected collaboration skills, action planning, problem-solving, and decision making. Twenty-seven percent also said that the ability to manage change is important, and 26 percent chose the ability to manage accountability. When we looked to see whether the skill-develop. To conclude findings of this study, it is good to highlight that teams (managers or team leaders) should pay attention to factors like communication and training, team composition, and team leadership directly impacts virtual team success.

4.4 Challenges Faced by Diverse Teams

It is not easy to make diverse teams' effective. Some forces work against the desired effect: having the entire team productive. There can be potential negative effects of any of the following:

- Unconscious bias
- Stereotype threat
- Exclusion from critical social networks
- Lack of role models, and unaware managers

Getting Diversity At Work To Work research has identified cultural diversity as a "double-edged sword" (Fong, 2007) and suggested that identifying when teams can benefit from cultural diversity and when cultural diversity may be detrimental is of great importance. Increasingly, research has therefore called for theories that take into account contingencies of (cultural) diversity's effects (Nederveen P, Knippenberg, D., and Di-erendonck, D. 2013). People from different cultural backgrounds may, therefore, have different belief structures, priorities, perceptions, assumptions about future events, beliefs about the role of information, and information-processing methods. These differences may translate into different perspectives on a task and a focus on different information, which may produce corresponding differences in knowledge. All this mentioned above is a part of each diversity challenge. Diversity always means a list of different bullet points, and they might work together and benefit, or they may not, this is the point when the right management is important.

4.5 Top Challenges of Virtual Teams

Top challenges for all non-face to face collaboration are tools. Virtual teams are required to use technologies. The technology (TelePresense, blue jeans, hangout and several other technologies), which are a sophisticated high-definition video conferencing technology, allows virtual team members to hold meetings and feel as though they are sitting across a conference room table from one another, rather than

just hearing a voice on the telephone or sending a message to the person in a chat room.

Another challenge is lack of face to face communication. Loss of context and nonverbal communication leads to poor communication and mistrust. Much of the context of communication, so important in high-context society, is lost, particularly if teams rely on voice or text technology only. Even members from low-context societies will find virtual communication more of a challenge since they cannot see nonverbal cues, which represent as much as 80 to 93 percent of the meaning people receive in face-to-face communication. Cultural differences can become amplified, and personality conflicts more pronounced. Virtual teams must work harder to build relationships and get to know each other as people. Without shared workspace, it is difficult to share and discuss complex information (diagrams, balance sheets, etc.). Web conferencing is improving but still not perfect, and teams often encounter problems with different document versions and with materials not being formatted for easy and quick focus on the right information. Connection and trust are difficult to build in a virtual environment, and the lack of trust may put a virtual team on a “collision course.”

One of the challenges which tools might not be able fully to overcome is time zone difference, which might exclude team members from common work and practices and lead to misunderstandings. Mistrust and misunderstanding might lead to such problem as team members do not share relevant information with one another, which can be avoided with smart management. Also one of the important aspects of any team is lack of skill training. Based on studies percentage of responses surprisingly high, team members—and in some cases team leaders —frequently lack clarity about who their fellow team members are. Having team members who are here today and gone tomorrow lead to another big challenge for virtual teams— communication. The frequent change of team members makes it difficult to find the most effective ways to communicate with one another and to build relationships effectively. According to studies, the top-performing teams in our study typically had a core group of individuals whose membership did not fluctuate frequently. On the less-effective teams, however, members were frequently added and removed. Also should be taken into consideration size of the team. The bigger team, more it is complex. It includes more individuals and divers which need to be managed and achieve collective tasks.

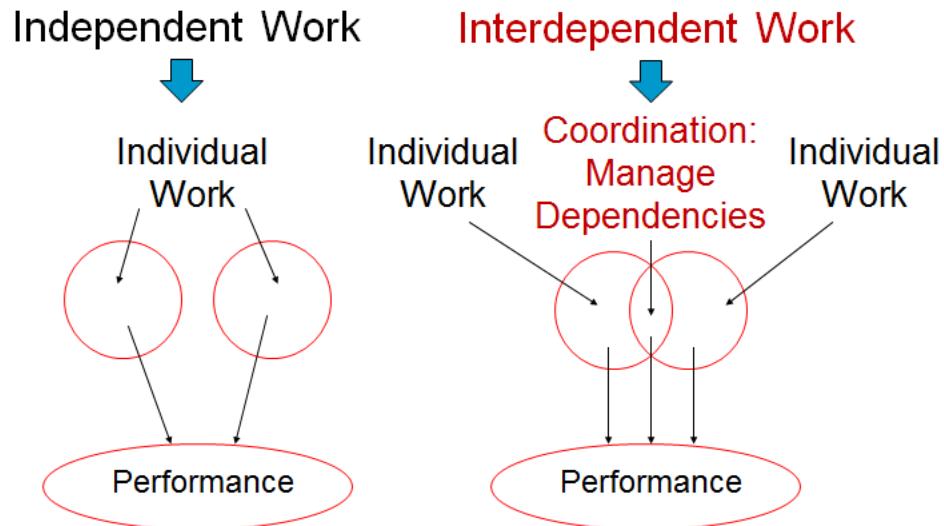
When the team is missing clear goals, direction, and management, a lack of clear goals and priorities will inhibit team performance. And because it is tougher to communicate with team members who are geographically distributed and keep them informed, this can be an even bigger problem for virtual teams. Another side, which is very often forgotten in teams, is clear roles distribution among team members. In virtual teams, it is especially important for team members to clearly understand their roles, specifically who they report to and who reports to them. A poorly designed accountabilities structure can have a huge impact on virtual teams. As it was mentioned above, one of the biggest and most common challenges is lack of communication. When a diverse group of individuals is asked to work together to accomplish shared objectives, it takes time to build an atmosphere of collaboration. And because there is a lack of face-to-face contact inherent in virtual teamwork, the process of developing trust and building relationships can be even more arduous.

One of the studies showed that decisions about team size and membership are critical to the success of virtual teams—especially when team composition is likely to become more dynamic over time. (Darleen DeRosa, Richard Lepsinger, ,2010). One of the most interesting findings of the studies on virtual team performance shows that, virtual teams that held an initial face-to-face meeting within the first ninety days of the team coming together performed better than those who never met face-to-face.

Teamwork is a set of skills that must be developed through practice and feedback. Each team member has its role. *Coordinator-mediator* is an important role in the team. Coordination is the "management of dependencies among task activities" (Malone and Crowston, 1994). If task activities can be carried out somewhat independently coordination is costly and not necessary. Unfortunately, coordination is often misunderstood, because it can be viewed either as an outcome or as a process

Coordination Outcomes = Extent to which dependencies have been effectively managed (e.g., benefits, costs)

Coordination Processes = Actions aimed at managing dependencies. They can be:



Based on the previous charts and mentioning 'mediator' role in the team, it would be necessary to clarify that team dynamics can be natural and artificial. Team manager or team leader could act as a mediator or can give this role to one of the members. As well very often one of the team members becoming a mediator based on his/her cultural and personal beliefs. Usually, the role of the mediator is to connect team members and to help to establish connections.

For better success team should have team goal statement SMART, to have clear goals and understanding why they are working together and what are the expectations. The goals should be specific, measurable, aligned, realistic, time-bound or time frame should be clarified. Developing team norms is one of the big and important aspects. Team norms and values will create a team culture and predict the behavior of team members. That should include team meeting etiquette, expectations of collaboration communication, processes and rules based on email answers, etc. Which technologies should be used for communication and what support they need. Which resources are available to support team.

Questions that should be asked by the manager or team lead:

Why do many virtual teams fail to meet performance expectations?

What differentiates the very best virtual teams from those that are less successful?

What differentiates highly effective virtual team leaders from those that are less effective?

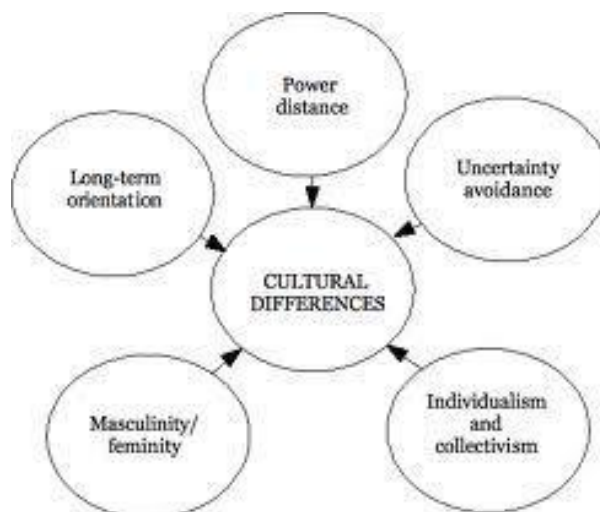
The reality is that many factors are working against global teams: distance, culture, and, all too frequently, lack of interaction among the members. There should be a clear leadership and direction of a virtual team; virtual team members need to have a solid idea of what is expected of the team, that is, the business goals and business values of the team. For the best start, there should be first meeting where the team would be introduced to each other almost like face-to-face but virtually. It is a good idea to have an actual physical face to face meeting for trust and positive dynamics establishment. Tools play a main role for virtual teams. Each member should feel included in all decisions and conversations; there should be a clear flow of information. There should be no difference if team members sit in one room or located on different continents. Nowadays many virtual platforms support this collaboration. A manager should understand all sides of diversity in the team.

Diversity calls for managing people who are not like you and who don't aspire to be like you. Its taking differences into account while developing a cohesive whole. – r. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. author beyond race and gender. It is important to manage and direct cultural difference. We all are coming with a different history from all kind of parts of the world. That's why top companies agree that managing cultural diversity across and within and across nations is a critical management skill. Virtual teams have the ad-

vantage to have more diverse team members. Why the diversity of network matters, because if network is made up of people who are similar to an identity (e.g., race, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or class) or organizational (e.g., hierarchical level and departmental affiliation) group membership, they are more likely to have similar experiences, perceptions, and networks as you have. More diverse network, more likely for a team to have access to a greater range of resources that can provide task, career, and social support. Furthermore, organizations should remember about positive publicity. It is nice for companies to be well known as company open doors for diversities. Diverse teams, when well managed, tend to make better decisions than relatively homogeneous groups, particularly when dealing with non-routine, complex problems in which the diversity of team members provides resources that are relevant to the teams\ tasks.

Organizations that effectively manage diversity may have lower operating costs because people in minority groups are more likely to be more satisfied with the organization are better able to use their abilities at work and are less likely to leave the organization to look for better opportunities elsewhere. (Hofstede theory)

Cultural intelligence (CQ) captures this capability for adaptation across cultures, and it reflects a person's capability to gather, interpret, and act upon these radically different cues to function effectively across cultural settings or in a multicultural situation.



(Hofstede)

Seven Dimensions

Universalism – Particularism (relations or rules)

Individualism-Collectivism (focus on individuals or group/team)

Neutral – Emotional (relates to the display of our emotions)

Specific – Diffuse (separation of private life & work)

Achievement - Ascription (status is given, or we have to prove ourselves)

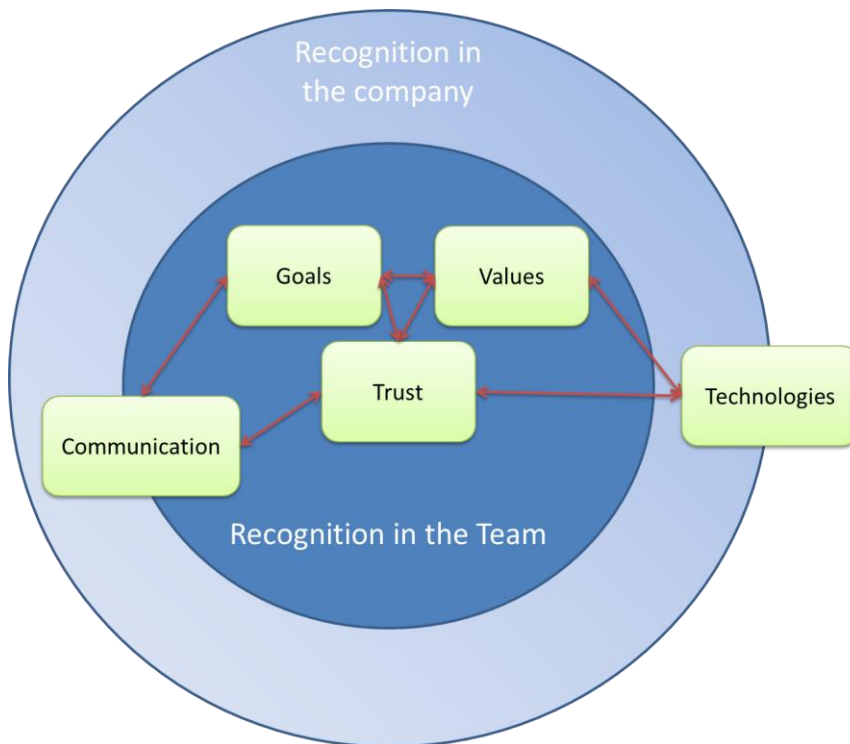
Sequential – Synchronic (undertake single items or multitask)

Internal - External Control (the environment controls us, or we have to control it)

Combining the understanding of all sides of team dimension there is a clear conclusion that successful team should be lead by a successful manager. There should be a leader in the team, which sets clear goals, utilizes all diverse sides of the team, help to over-cross challenges and making sure that all tools are working and all and each team member is equally participating in teamwork and team culture.

Henry Mintzberg Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) all effective managers require a “worldly” mindset ...the kind of thinking that moves away from a local view to a perspective that captures the context at the boundaries of an organization. (James Collins, diversity course lecture 2015).

4.6 Conceptual framework



Based on the existing knowledge studies several points need to be taken into consideration: Goals and Values, to follow a concept of the team, there should be common goals and values established and well described. Technologies should allow each team member be a part of the process no matter the distance or presence in one particular location. That should include everyday communication, such as emails, phone calls, and skype and hangouts meetings, weekly and one on one meeting via messengers. As well there should be virtual workspace which would be reachable and available for all team members no matter on the location. Communication, based on existing knowledge studies, there was the clear importance of communication through all levels of the team and between team and corporation. There should be free and clear communication not only between team members, and manager but as well each person in a team and corporation. In this concept communications and technologies support each other. Trust, according to existing knowledge studies, along with communication there should be trust. Teams that had built trust within a community, between each other, manager and corporation should have also easier communication. Recognition, one of the concepts very often underestimated or forgotten but not least important. The main motivation for better performance is recognition, within the team, within the corporation.

To smooth communication and build trust, very often team needs to have a mediator. Someone, who will be a connecting point between team members themselves and manager, a mediator would have this role into information flow and be responsible for trust building and implementation of changes. A mediator is not only connection point but as well motivation to accept changes or to encourage team members to accept changes.

5 Building proposal

After few months of work and adaptation period in the team, a new team member took a role of mediator and started to have frequent communication and one on one sections with the team manager. At the same time manager had recognized problems within the team and based on survey results realized that there should be further steps taken. The change of the team recognition, structure and work started with clear goals establishment, workload distribution, hiring new members and working toward team recognition within the company, can be named as developing team processes that enhance accountability and providing resources to support team.

5.1 Proposal highlights

First of all following weak points were discovered:

Goals and Values

Technologies

Communication

Trust

Recognition

First of all, there should be established **clear team structure**. This structure should include clear management, leadership line and describe the role of each team member. Also, there should be established clear and common for all team **Goals and Values**. This will align all team members and unite them. Next step for virtual team success should well establish **Technologies**. It should include virtual space, common knowledge space, communication and working channels. Manager and team leader should work **Communication**, with each team member and between teammates. Next step for success would be working on **Trust**, through communication and collaboration with teammates. Trust should be worked through all the levels, not only between manager and team members but as well between teammates themselves.

Recognition is one of the challenges or sides that very often forgotten. Work of manager and leader of the team not only to recognize team members within the team but as well make sure that team recognized within the company.

5.2 Action points

The first action should be taken direction team structure establishment. The manager should make clear role distribution and role description for each member. At the same time, there should be team building brainstorming session. During this session, there should be evaluated team goals and values. This values and goals should be recognized by each team member and should be officially listed in the team description. There should be established virtual common space for knowledge sharing. The manager should take care in finding best suitable technologies and tools for the team. That should include tools for daily work, such as Skype connection, or live team chats, for fast and easy communication. With established technologies manager should build communication on weekly bases for the team together and have one on one with each team member. One on one will help for both direct communication and trust building. For establishing trust, the manager should not only listen to employees but as well make action points and take actions based on personal meeting outcomes.

The manager should start working towards team recognition in the corporation and each member for personal recognition within the team. To archive, this manager should present team, its goals and values on the company level, during monthly updates and stakeholders meetings. At that time should be published yearly team goals and achievement plans. There should be created a webpage with team description. This page should include information about the team, team goals, and values and should have a small presentation of each member. It will help not only to outline team structure but as well have clear role descriptions. This will help for people outside of the team to have a clear picture which questions they could address to which team member. This webpage should also include achievements and goals for motivation.

Within the process and changes mentioned above, the manager should make sure that each team member has the right amount of work, there should be right workload distribution and option for people development. For personal development, there should be support for team members to take part in internal projects, qualification courses and come up with personal projects related to work.

6 Implementation and analysis

At first, there was established a clear structure within the team: team manager, team leader, each team member had responsible area. Team manager was taking care of conflict, communication failures, technology part and overall team support when team leader role became more as an advisor on the professional level, where each team member could easily find support or ask questions from one person.

After that further steps were taken. Team manager took care of communications and technologies establishment. Since then each team member had a one-on-one meeting once with the manager, who was incurring healthy discussions. This one-on-one meeting gave the manager better understanding of inside conflicts and team member communications, highlighted problems and got ideas what can be done further. On top of by-weekly one one-on-one meeting, there was established weekly team meetings and updates. At the same time, a new communication strategy was established: emails, personalized work-chat, an online workspace. Each member of the team was taking a rotation on leading the meeting and taking notes, thus motivated each team member to take this meeting more seriously and pay more attention to other team members. Based on one on ones with the mediator and supporting the team members' ideas, each meeting started to have knowledge sharing session. Which was not only helping to build trust and bonding between team members but also encouraged and motivated to grow professionally and to look for new projects and new areas of knowledge sharing? New technologies and established official ways of limited communication conflicts not only between team members but also put down the pressure from other teams (sales and customer support). Also, it gave more flexibility on the work, working hours and team members' collaboration across borders. Meetings were more flexible based on the difference between time zones and weekdays. Another step that was taken by the manager, was leveraging team talents by providing more information on available development possibilities within team and company, supporting and encouraging new ideas and new projects like common shared knowledge space, which would minimize mistakes and give a good base for new members, by having all information on the working processes.

As it was mentioned above, there were not only problems in processes and technologies but as well in the people behavior and communication. Building trust and bonding is harder part than technologies as it is including human behavior. As the team has

cultural and age diversity that was even more challenging. The first step was a right workload distribution and promotions. That showed to people applications of their work and motivation. When team members had an equal amount of work and chance to take part in company life or taking part in new projects, it lifted up team's spirit. Also as recognition, few team members from KL were invited to HEL. In one of the studies that described, in theory, part was a recommendation for even in virtual teams to meet with team members in person at least once. That gave a good example that people start to understand each other better when they meet in person. There could be psychological effect behind it. When we communicate with someone from a distance, and we never see that person in real life we do not recognize that person as real. He/she becomes virtual. When after meeting and working for some time in person, you start to recognize the person and have better chances for easier communication.

Another knowhow for establishing trust and internal communication became weekly team lunches and monthly team events. In the beginning, weekly team lunch was taken by team members as something negative, as some forced action. Thus with the time has changed. Why is it important to have a meal together with your team. At first, it will give an opportunity to meet your colleague away from the desk, away from work. This is an extra time to find more about personalities, life away from work or even discuss some work questions in different surroundings. Very often some of the team members were not able to find time for food or were eating in different time. Team lunches established an opportunity for team members to have this lunch together and get closer. Team events had same nonformal get to know each other goal. In the beginning, like all changes, that was also taken as a force to get together outside of work. Later on, the manager was able to change an attitude by bringing up on the team events promotion news or team recognition award. By all mentioned above actions, the team was not only got healthier environment but also was recognized by the company and got the best team and team recognition award and prizes in the year 2016.

The second survey questionnaire was made within half a year since all the changes started to take place. As a result, the team became more diverse on the age, nationality, and gender. There is still missing a communication within the KL office as the survey was taken only by the team members in Finland. This shows that more personal presence and connection establishes better relationships. As Henry Ford said: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is a success." And this working together part is the hardest one.

Based on survey results of 2016, in total, team members had more optimistic feelings towards their career and current employer. Only one team member wasn't ready to recommend the current company as an employer. Team members were willing to recommend the company because of a good product, core values, nice atmosphere and good colleagues. For downsides, were mentioned low salary and not full-feeling promises. As well trust was mentioned as an issue. As Cassey Stengel said: "it is easy to get good players. Getting them to play together, that's the hard part." Building trust is one of the hardest issues.

Overall team members were feeling more positive about their job and positive to come to work every day. Based on the survey only one person was unhappy to come to work when the rest of the team easier had strongly agreed or agreed with that formulation. Seven out of nine team members had a clear understanding of the role expectations and on their work. Most of the team members were able to perform their best on everyday tasks. When it's coming to personal feelings or a friendly environment, every response was easier positive or neutral. This means that there were friendship, trust and connections established well among team members. There are still areas for improvement like appreciation of the work. Looking at the responses, one can see that most of the team members feel that their work is underappreciated, also that people do not trust them as to experts in their field. Also, a neutral response to the amount of work can indicate that people are not happy with amount or distribution of work. Also third of team members did not see themselves at the same position or within same company in next three years. Which indicates that they do not believe that they could grow professionally or have opportunities in the current place, which lowers motivation.

The current survey highlighted that there were growing conflict and mistrust with the manager. Comments about promises and not fulfillment show that team members did not see the current manager as a positive role model. The strongest opinion of the team was on the common goal and objectives, which is very positive as common goal is a first get together point for teams. As well as collaboration, all the team members believe that they are doing their best on collaboration and communication. As it was mentioned in theory part, common goal and collaboration are the base leads to successful teamwork. As well as clear role distribution in the team leads to better communication (Appendix 2, question 23)

Answers to questions 24 and 25 show that this team had a problem when it scaled to the virtual team or going across the borders. Team members had felt that communica-

tion and collaboration with virtual team members are missing. This based on preferences of the members. Most of them find face to face communication preferable and easier. Also, it's mentioned that there are not enough meeting or communication between sides to establish common goals and strategies. It can be agreed with the comment that multicultural team is more beneficial; it is an advantage in globalization time. Based on the survey we can see that technologies are lacking on establishing smooth virtual community, on making two teams one. Team members based in Finland didn't feel like one team with members from KL. Frequent traveling of team members could overcome that to both offices.

There were as well few comments from team members on the improvement of team spirit and culture. Suggestions included team events, bonuses, get together, create relaxing and welcoming atmosphere, make sure people are not able to shut away from the team, cross-team meetings formal and informal, freer after work activities to get together with team members, open discussions, and last but not least acknowledgment.

Based on the second survey we can see a clear improvement in the team spirit in one location. Team members are willing and motivated to improve the situation. What is missing is more clear communication with manager. There is raising up a question should the manager be more involved in everyday tasks of the team to become a part of the team instead of being separated unit. Culture and spirit establishing is a long and hard process which involves all members and includes effort from all members. By this survey and observation, we can conclude that positive changes are already visible, there is only time and further development needed. As well we can conclude that it is easier to work and manage with traditional way established team than virtual team. Due to the lack of technologies and face to face contact trust and communication establishment in such teams are longer and harder.

7 Conclusion

To conclude this observation work, we can say that virtual team is not much different from the team by the structure. The challenges of a virtual team are in right management, the right way of communication and technologies. In Virtual teams management the most important moment of the establishment. It is easier to build processes right way from the beginning than to change it later. Each company at the end can choose its way of working and collaborating. Some teams virtual due to the time zones or expenses, or due to the projects and talents availability on the market.

"You have no choice but to operate in a world shaped by globalization and the information revolution. There are two options: Adapt or die... You need to plan the way a fire department plans. It cannot anticipate fires, so it has to shape a flexible organization that is capable of responding to unpredictable events." —Andrew S. Grove, Intel Corporation (36)

This study shows that half a year is a short period to make all changes, to establish a solid culture, but it is enough time to start. It is enough time to evaluate teamwork and to see main issues and start working on them. It is enough time to see positive results on hard work even within half a year. Recommendations for managing diverse virtual teams would be as general as managing any team; several steps need to be done.

Goals and Values

Technologies

Communication

Trust

Recognition

A team should have common goals and values, this important to have from the beginning, or would be a first subject to be checked in the team. Each team member should have and understand clearly his or her role. There should be a fair and right distribution of work and roles within the team. The team should have right technologies to support their communication. The specific needs of the team should adopt tools, easier it is a virtual project application such as Asana, virtual common space, common folders, or online messengers for frequent communication. As an advice team should try several different technologies and online working spaces to choose the right one. As for management, there should be not only clear goals but as well clear appreciation and motivation established. Promotions and recognition should be clear, and each team mem-

ber should have access to this information. Trust is the hardest value from the list to establish and easiest to lose. This is in manager responsibilities. The manager should not only communicate with team members but also make sure that information and feedback he or she receives is going forward, and there is the outcome, which ideas not only listened but heard. The best motivations for better work neither outcome, not money nor bonuses, but are actual trust and recognition. One should remember that each team consists individuals and there is no magic formula which gives instructions that will fit every team. On other hands, there are basics which by following will establish better teams with better chances for success.

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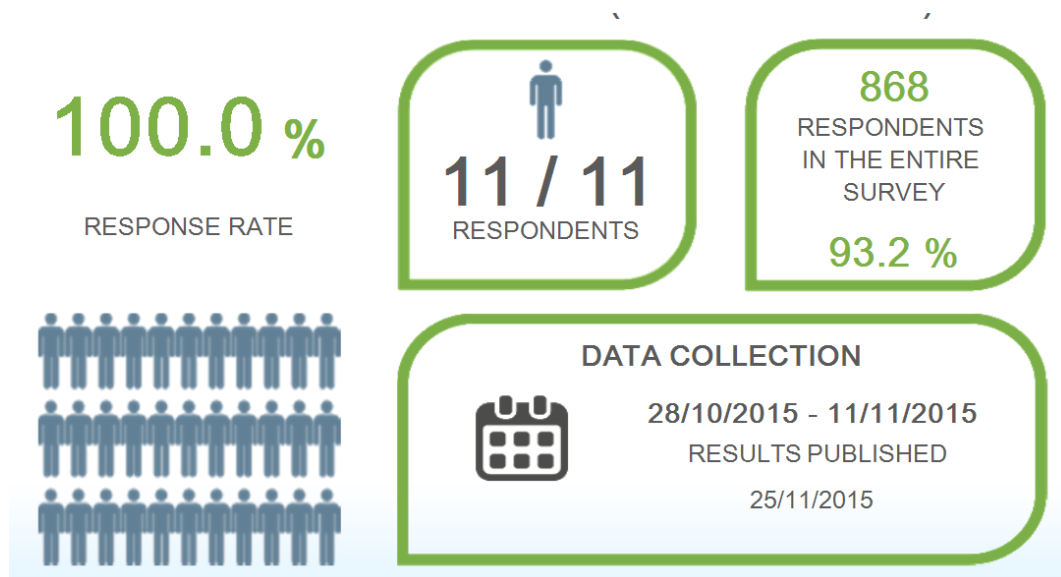
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Team survey 2015



Recommending this current company as an employer: 18,2 out of 100.

Following scale is 1 to 5, where one is lowest, five is highest.

I feel positive when coming to work:

Average 3.09

I know what I am expected to do

Average 3.64

I can do my best every day

Average 3.55

I have friends at work

Average 3.20

I feel like my work is appreciated

Average 3.09

I feel like I have a right amount of work

Average 2.91

I am growing professionally at a current place

Average 2.55

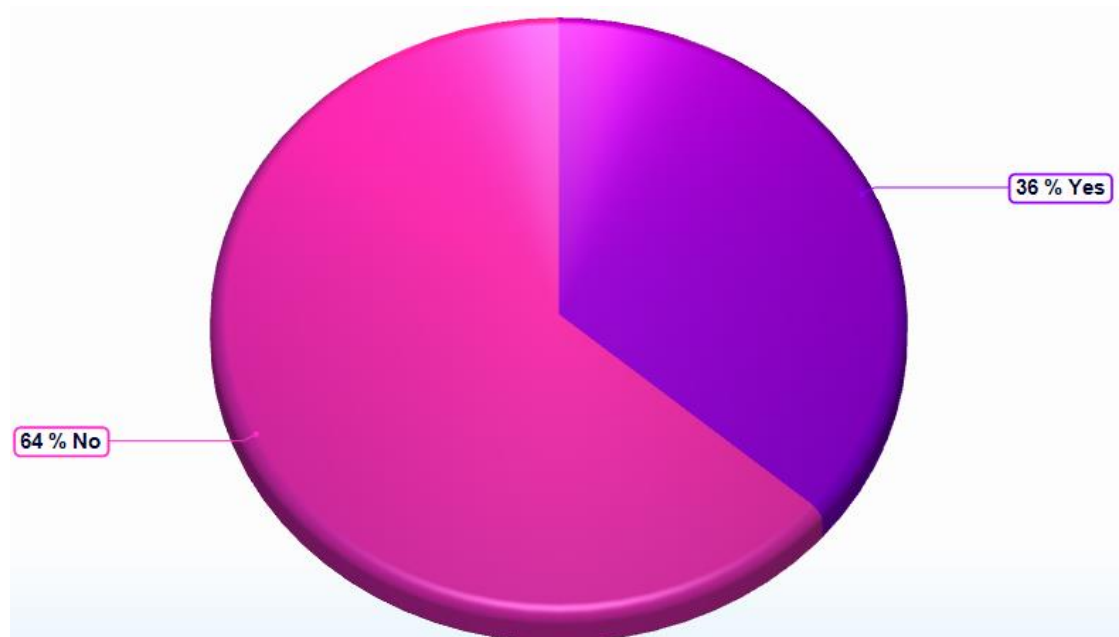
I will be at the same company in 3 years

Average 2.80

People respect my expert opinion

Average 2.73

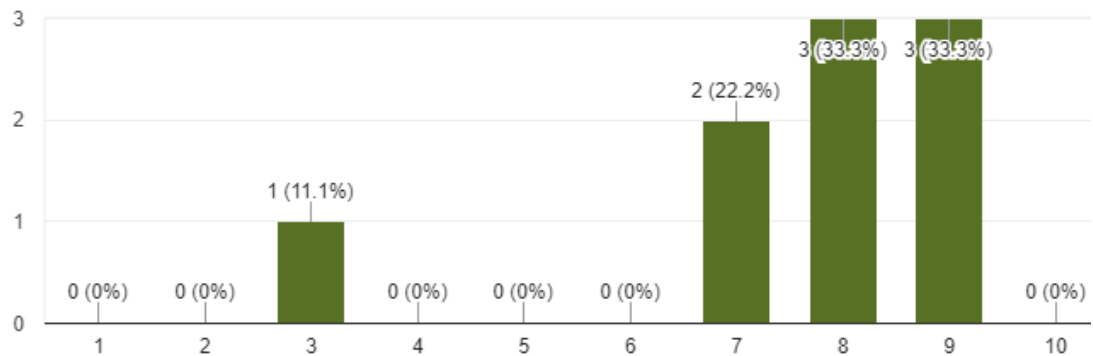
Thoughts of looking to work with another company:



Team survey 2016

1. How likely is it that you would recommend the current company as a place to work for one of your friends or family members? (9/9)

9 responses



2. What is the primary reason for your rating above? (7/9)

The culture

The overall attitude within the company

Nice atmosphere and colleagues

Promotes wellbeing, enables good work/life balance

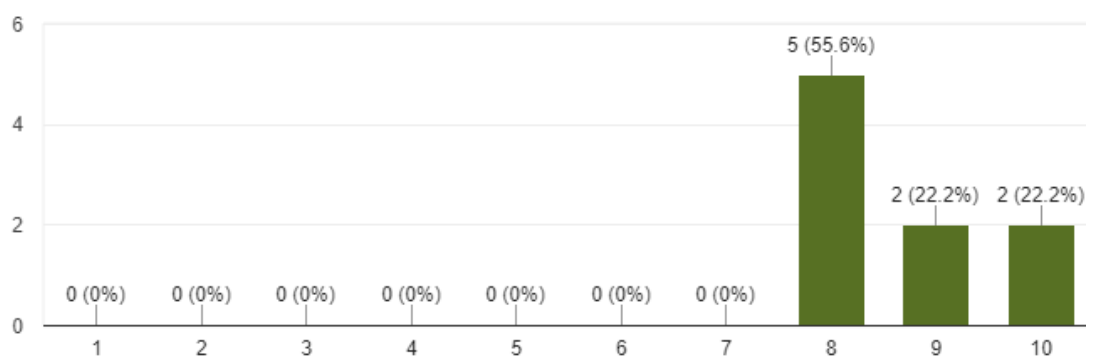
Core values

Low salary level and now change to grow up professionally

Too many empty promises are given, trust is not here at the moment I think.

3. How likely is it that you would recommend our products to one of your friends or family members? (9/9)

9 responses



4. What is the primary reason for your rating: How likely is it that you would recommend our products to one of your friends or family members? (7/9)

Easy to use

Good products

The products are good and reliable

I believe in our products.

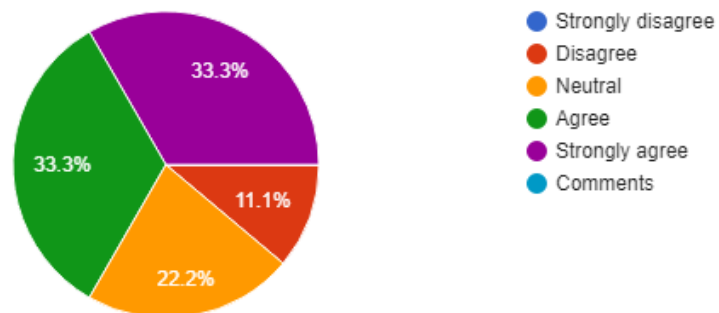
Local support and reliability

Good solid product

Security is important online, and I'd prefer a domestic company to use.

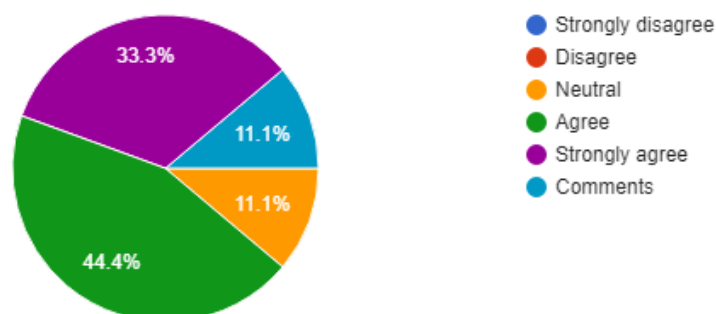
5. I feel positive when coming to work (9/9)

9 responses



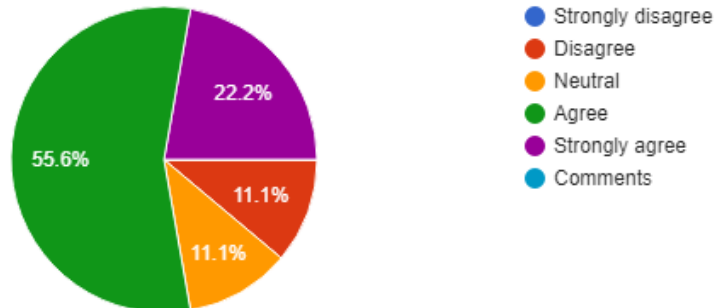
6. I know what I am expected to do (9/9)

9 responses



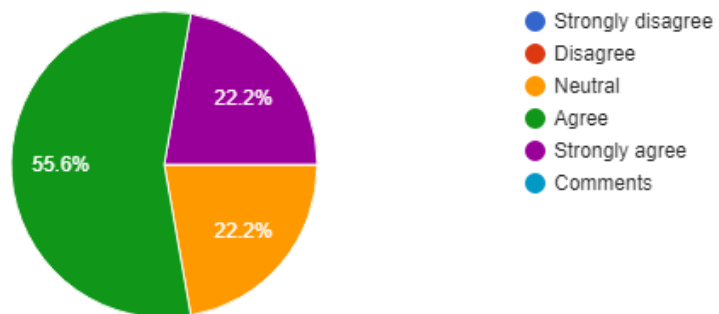
7. I can do my best every day (9/9)

9 responses

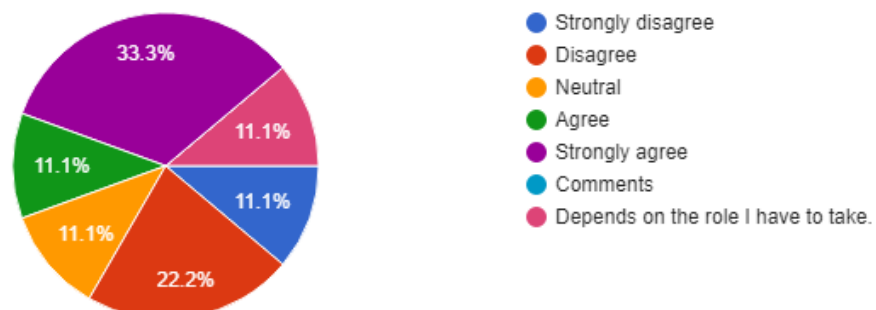


8. I have friends at work (9/9)

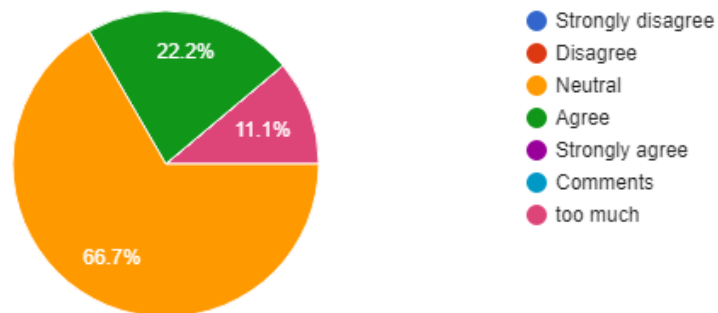
9 responses



9. I feel that my work is appreciated (9/9)

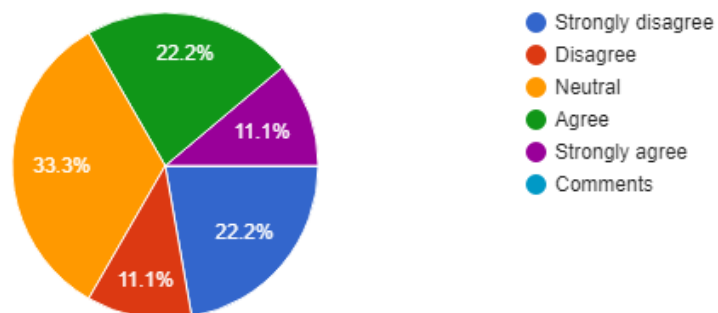


10. I feel that I have the right amount of work (9/9)



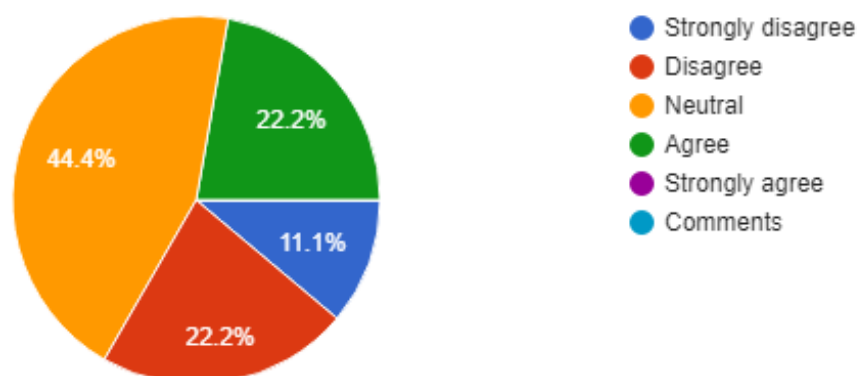
11. I am growing professionally at the current company (9/9)

9 responses

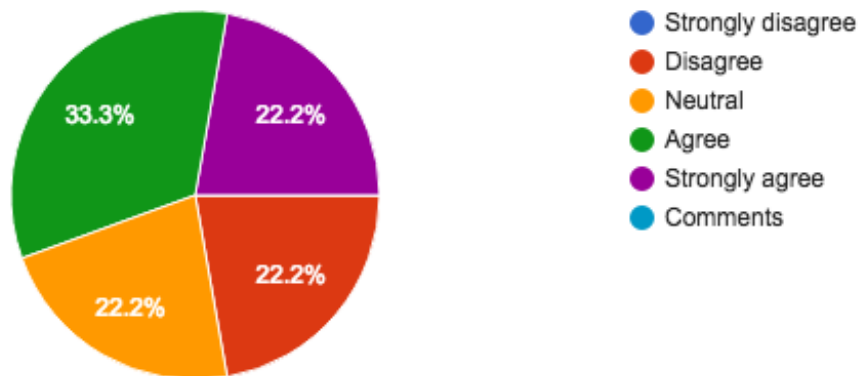


12. I believe that I will be at the current company three years from now (9/9)

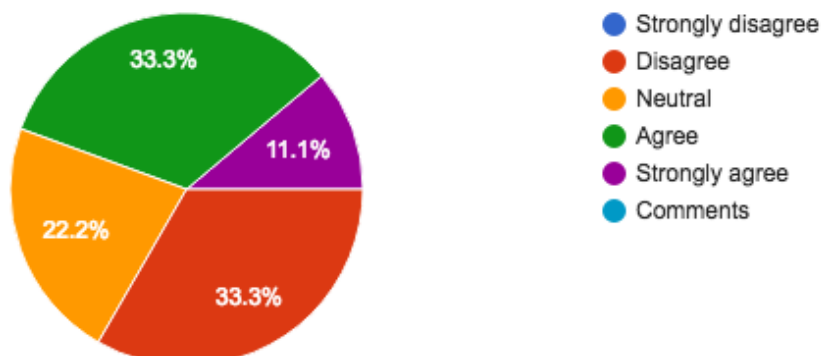
9 responses



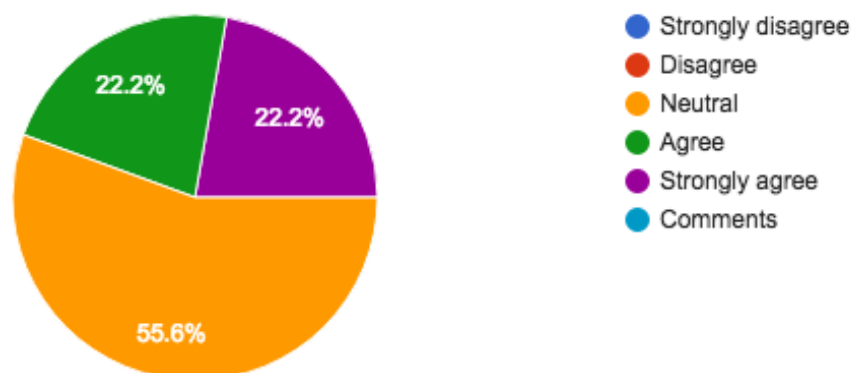
13. People respect my expert opinion (9/9)



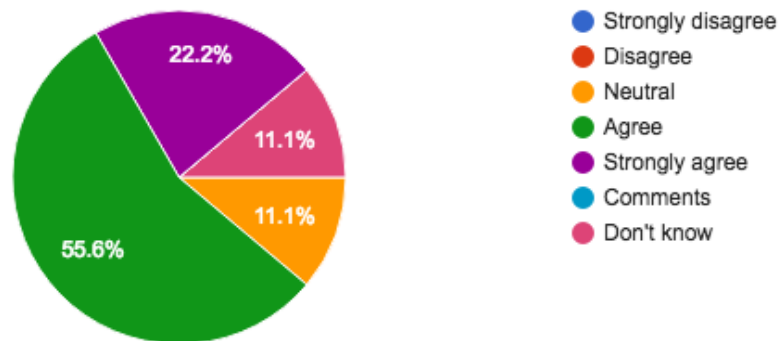
14. My manager acts as a positive role model for the current company leading principles (9/9)



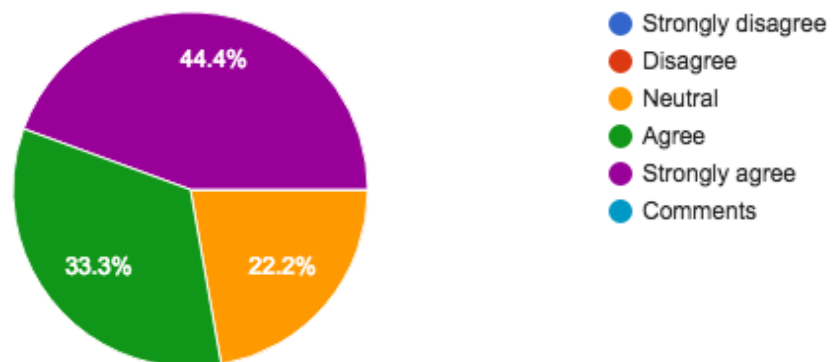
15. The mission of current company makes my job feel meaningful (9/9)



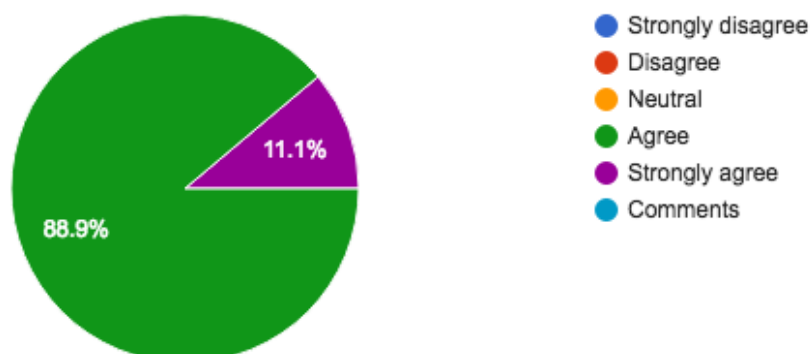
16. I trust that we have made the right strategic choices as a company (9/9)



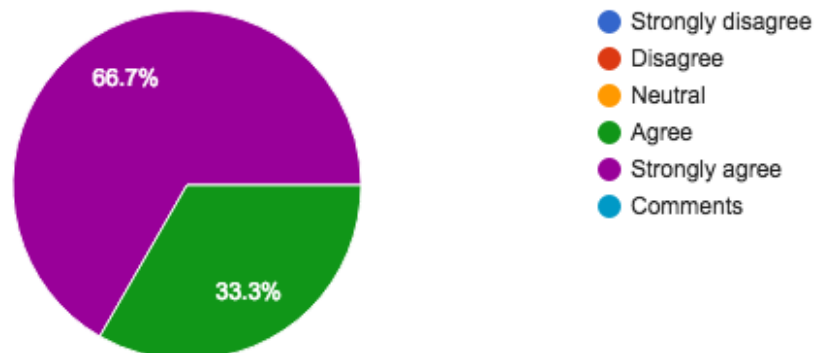
17. My work is important to the success of the company (9/9)



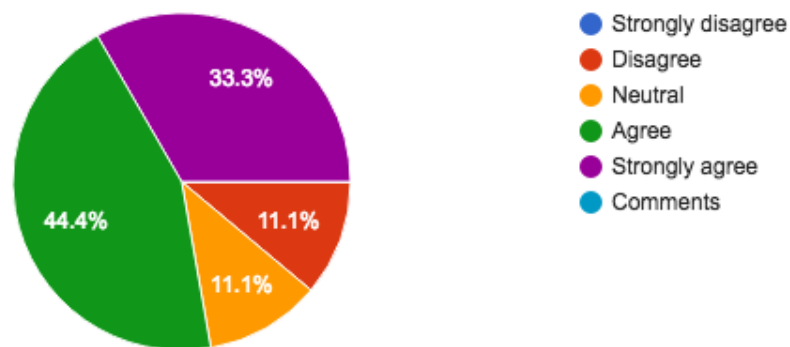
18. In my BL/function, everybody works together towards common objectives, Comments (9/9)



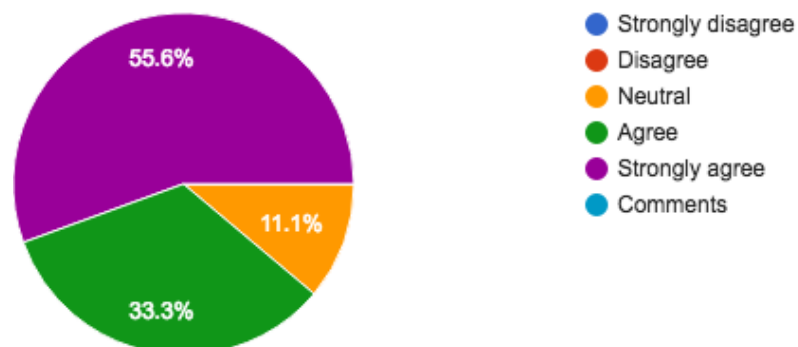
19. I do my best to improve collaboration with the current company (9/9)



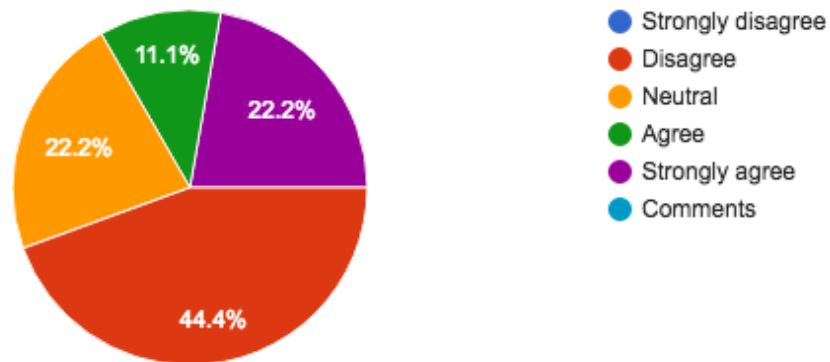
20. At the current company, we care about wellbeing (9/9)



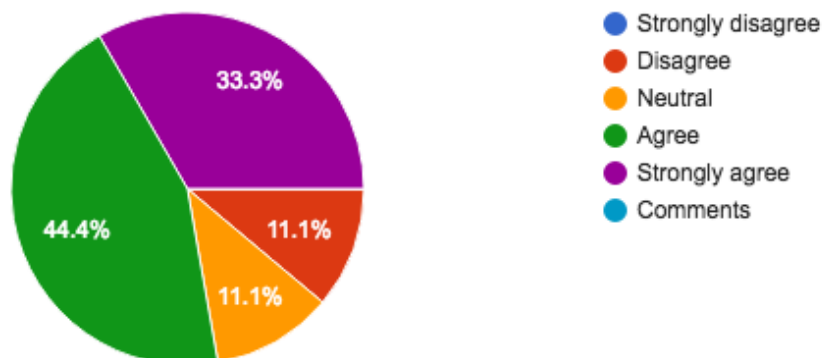
21. The current company feels like a global company (9/9)



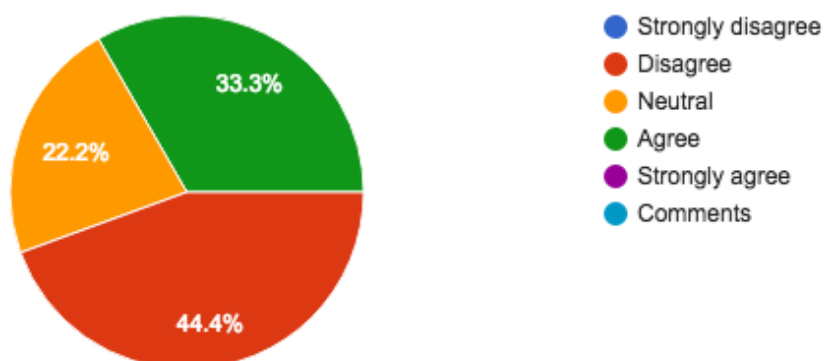
22. I have recently thought of looking for work with another employer (9/9)



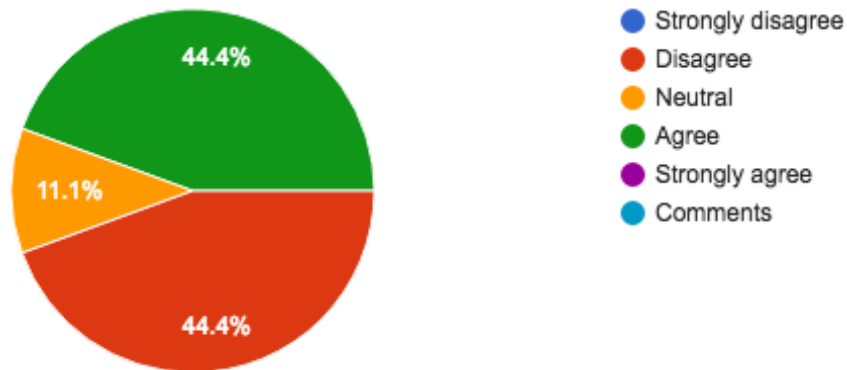
23. I have a clear role within the team (9/9)



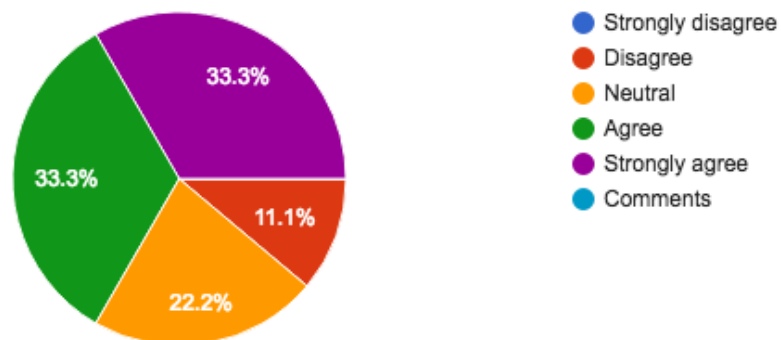
24. I think the team is well structured over the sides (globally) (9/9)



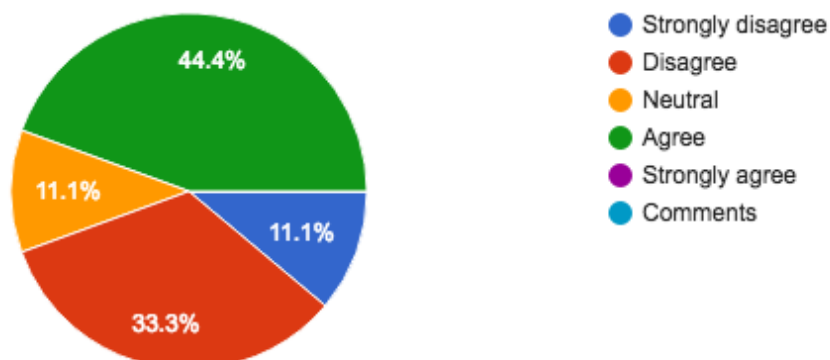
25. I think we have clear communication within the team (9/9)



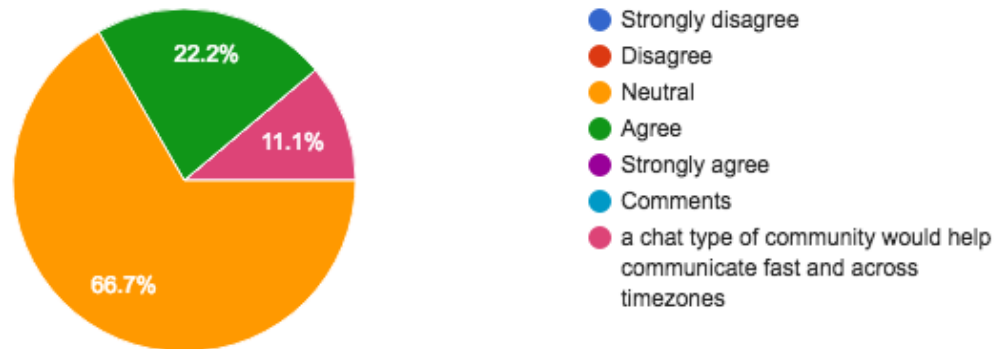
26. I find it easier to communicate with team face to face then virtual (mail, chats e.tc) (9/9)



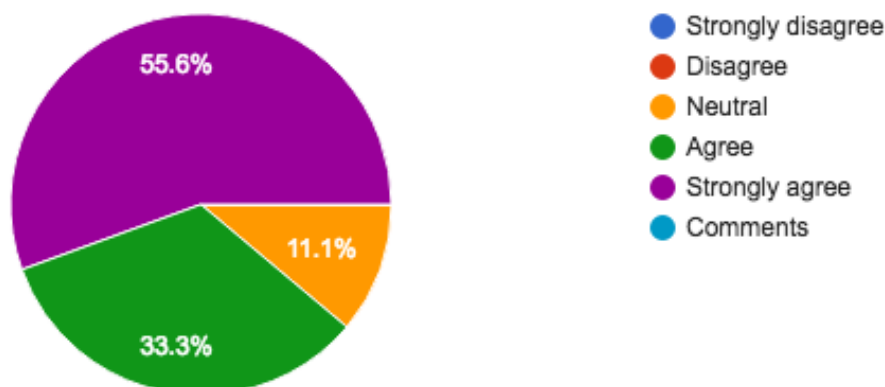
27. I think we have enough meetings to cross-check the team spirit, goals and for clear communication of the sides (9/9)



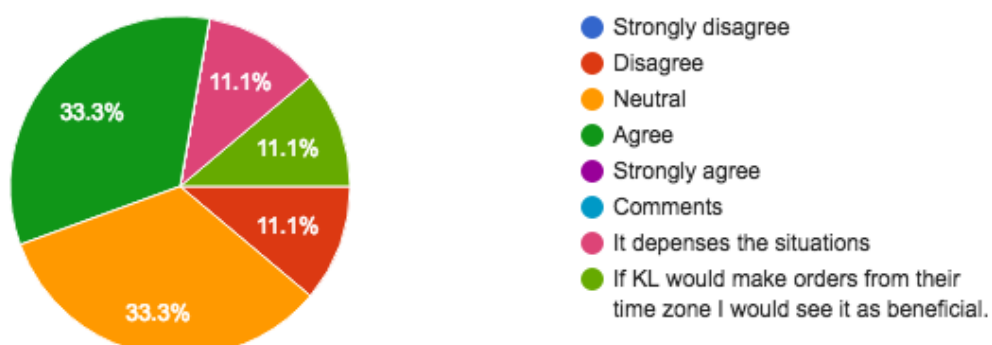
28. I think there could be other ways to make communication easier (when it comes to global communication)(please comment) (9/9)



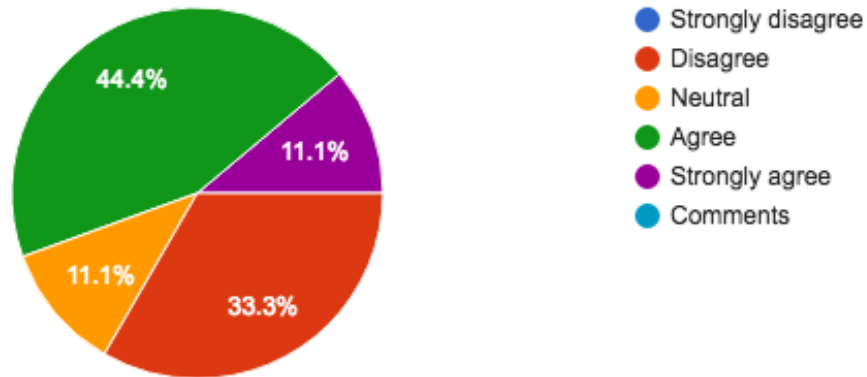
29. I think, to have a multicultural team is an advantage (please comment) (9/9)



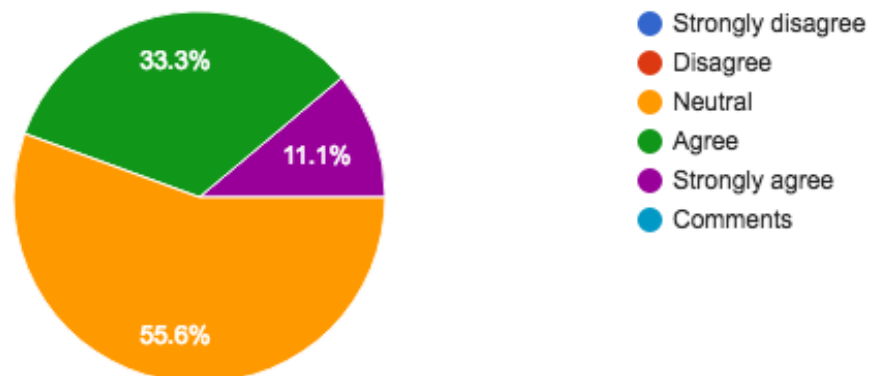
30. I think to have a team in several locations is beneficial for teamwork (please comment) (9/9)



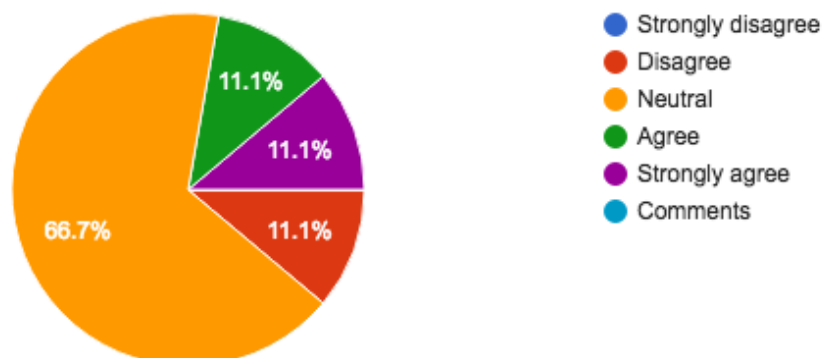
31. I feel we are a team no matter on culture, distance or location (9/9)



32. I have great ideas how to rise a team spirit (please feel free to put any thoughts) (9/9)



33. I have great ideas how to make our communication within the team better (please feel free to put any thoughts) (9/9)



34. I have great ideas how to rise a team spirit (please feel free to put any thoughts) (4/9)

Better bonus :) (e.,g. cases handled /quarter or same system as the sales people but with smaller %)

anything you do together; make sure people cannot wall themselves in behind huge, overfilled desk (small tables, no cabinets, etc.); do something crazy and fun at the desk (nerf-guns, through plush toys, etc.)

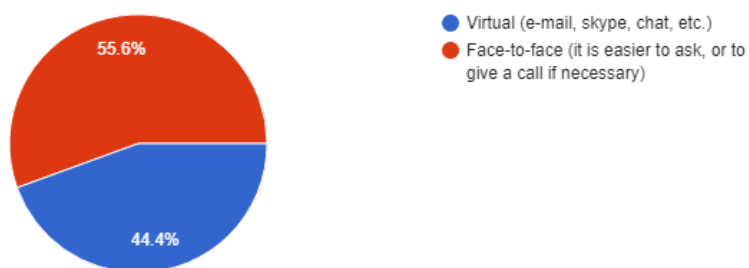
Having team evenings etc. together.

35. I have great ideas how to make our communication within the team better (please feel free to put any thoughts) (2/9)

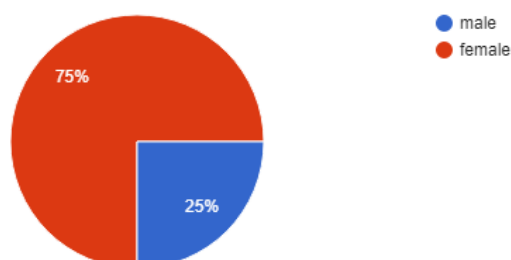
Team buildings

It is usually enough to provide the stage and to put people into a "cannot escape" situation. Once communicating is easier to bear than awkward silence one will start and the rest will follow.

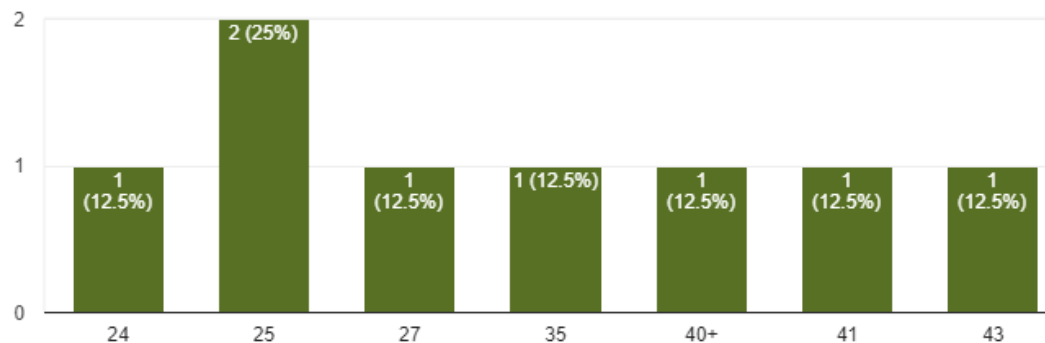
The way of communication I prefer and use more frequently with team members (9/9)



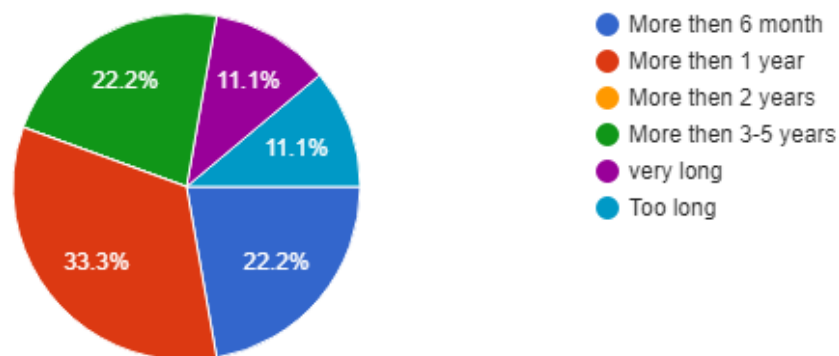
I am (8/9)



My age is (8/9)



I have been working with this team (9/9)



Please give your opinion, what would give a positive impact on team spirit, and your personal experience (go wild, team lunches, team-building, extra vacations, solid vacation planning, anything that close to your heart) (5/9)

Team buildings, solid vacation planning (why not extra vacation :)), bonus

Open discussion within the team, acknowledgment by management for team's efforts

more frequent spontaneous activities like lunch trips, coffee workshops, after work drinks, going for a walk outside instead of a meeting, etc.

Cross-team meetings. Both formal and informal.

Team spa night, team movie night, weekend trip after quarter closings.